

SYSTEM FOR CONFOCAL IMAGING WITHIN DERMAL TISSUE

Abstract

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An improved system for confocal imaging within dermal tissue of a patient is provided which minimizes instability in confocal images by reducing the relative motion of the tissue with respect to the confocal imaging optics of the system. The system includes a mechanism for maintaining an area of skin tissue under stress by application of force at the edges of the area, and an imaging head coupled to this mechanism for imaging the stressed skin. The mechanism includes a mechanical structure, such as a platen, brace, or attachment, which both supports the imaging head of the system and applies stress to a limited surface area of the tissue to minimize skin motion during confocal imaging.